

TO: SOUTHERN LIFE INSURANCE'S RICHMOND, VIRGINIA OFFICE
FROM: ANDREW BURNETT, GENERAL MANAGER
RE: SEXUAL HARRASSMENT EDUCATION
DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2011

As you are well aware, our Richmond, Virginia office has gradually outperformed all other Southern Life Insurance branches, earning the spot as the company's top seller. Our commitment as a team, our hard work, and the recent addition of several new employees have enabled us to excel. In fact, we expect to bring in over \$22 million in sales by the year's end! Along with this expansion come certain legal obligations. One of these is to discuss a very serious matter—sexual harassment within the workplace.

As a branch with more than fifteen in-office employees we are legally required to abide by the laws of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In an effort to clarify what may constitute sexual harassment I will briefly outline it. In order to avoid the occurrence of an incident due to misunderstanding or ignorance of the law, it is important that you read this brief education memo, regardless of how familiar you are with the subject. I am confident that we will continue to work well together in the future and avoid any situations that fall under the definition of sexual harassment. Nonetheless, I will say that Southern Life Insurance follows a no tolerance policy.

To best summarize what constitutes sexual harassment as defined by both Title VII and Southern Life Insurance's own policy, I will address the following questions:

- What is sexual harassment?
- Why is sexual harassment harmful to the work environment?
- How can we prevent sexual harassment?

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. It includes the occurrence of unwelcome or uninvited advances, requests, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Yet, sexual harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature. For example, it includes words or actions that discriminate against a specific sex, such as making offensive comments about a gender. The gender of both the harasser and victim are irrelevant, as are their positions with respect to the workplace. Anyone—man, woman, employee, employer, client—can be a victim or a perpetrator. For more information on what defines sexual harassment, please visit the website of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which can be accessed through the following link <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-sex.cfm>.

Why is sexual harassment harmful to the work environment?

As with any form of discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment creates a negative work environment. First and foremost, it creates tension between the victim and harasser. Victims of sexual harassment are more likely to be unsatisfied with their jobs and are therefore less inclined to develop satisfying relationships with those around them. As a consequence, victims report experiencing more job-related stress, in addition to higher levels of anger and anxiety. The combination of these discourages commitment to the work environment. In short, sexual harassment works against the development of intra-office camaraderie.

How can we prevent sexual harassment?

Preventing sexual harassment is not always easy. Victims are encouraged to inform the harasser that the conduct is unwelcome. Doing so can be uncomfortable and intimidating, but is necessary. Victims should also make immediate use of the appropriate employer complaint or grievance systems. Those who are not directly victims of sexual harassment, but have witnessed it firsthand, should take action as well by filing a formal complaint. Eliminating sexual harassment from the workplace can be a difficult process, but the above steps are instrumental in its prevention.

While I am confident that no incidents will occur within our own office environment, educating you about sexual harassment is not only constructive, but, also, a legal requirement. We will have a short, mandatory meeting within the next several weeks in which a guest speaker will briefly discuss sexual harassment and answer any remaining questions you may have. You can also come to me with any questions, concerns or complaints. As always, I look forward to continue working with you all in a happy, friendly, productive environment.